

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A running board assembly for a motor vehicle, said running board assembly comprising:

a step;

5 a mounting assembly extending between said step and the motor vehicle for mounting said running board assembly on said vehicle enabling movement of said step between a retracted position and an extended position; and

a pneumatic cylinder operatively engaging said mounting assembly, whereby energizing said pneumatic cylinder effects said movement.

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2. A running board assembly as set forth in claim 1 wherein said step defines a tank for storing a supply of pressurized fluid to be used by said pneumatic cylinder when said pneumatic cylinder is energized.

15 3. A running board assembly as set forth in claim 2 including a spring extending between said step and the motor vehicle urging said step to said retracted position.

4. A running board assembly as set forth in claim 3 wherein said pneumatic cylinder includes a valve for fluidly communicating fluid into and out of said pneumatic cylinder.

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5. A running board assembly as set forth in claim 4 including a solenoid valve for opening said tank allowing said tank to receive compressed fluids.

25 6. A running board assembly as set forth in claim 5 including a controller for operating said valve and said solenoid valve.

7. A running board assembly as set forth in claim 6 wherein said step has a valved port selectively providing access to pressurized air inside said tank.

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8. A running board assembly as set forth in claim 2 further comprising a compressor fluidly connected to said tank.

9. A running board assembly as set forth in claim 8, wherein said tank has a pressure
5 sensor operatively connected to said compressor enabling said compressor to automatically fill said tank with fluid and maintain pressure within said tank at a desired level.

10. A running board assembly as set forth in claim 9, wherein said operative connection is via a controller.

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11. A running board assembly as set forth in claim 10, wherein speed of said movement is regulated to move at a desired rate of movement.

12. A running board assembly as set forth in claim 11, wherein said cylinder has a
15 valve operatively connected to said controller, and said controller includes a sensor mounted to measure speed of said sliding movement, whereby based on signals received from said sensor, said controller responsively opens and closes said valve to regulate said speed.

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